

2: Montagne

MW11 Shluh MW11

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Chart of positions of map 1.
[facing p. 26]

14 cont. / Accordingly, when bad harvests follow one another too closely, the less favored regions first cast the people back toward the springs and séguías; then, if the rains still delay, as happens several times a century, famine chases families and flocks toward the plains of the Gharb /Rharb/. Tribal migrations in the wake of wars and epidemics further accelerate this perpetual stir. The result of these internal movements is to facilitate the fusion of races, unify culture, and give to the elements that form the "Chleuh" /Shluh/ group common characteristics that distinguish it easily from the other Berbère /Berber/ populations.

VII. The roads of the Atlas and of the Anti-Atlas. -- Whatever may be the richness of the central valley of the Sous wadi, which the Zagmouzen, the Haut-Dra, and the Dadès produce between the two chains, it is not in this part of the Moroccan South that one can observe the most original manifestations of the social life of the Berbères /Berbers/. The latter are not at ease in the qsour /fortified places/ and the big villages in the midst of the séguías and gardens. There they encounter the "haraten" /Haratin/ -- descendants of black slaves -- the /15/ Arabs who have entered the service of the Makhzen /makhzan/, the shorfa /shurfa/, and the marabouts, attracted by the fertility of the land. The population of the oases resulting from this mixture of races soon loses all its warlike qualities and most often falls under the domination of foreign leaders or of the more bellicose tribes in the vicinity. The true territory of the autochthons remains the mountains, and it is by studying the groups that occupy them and remain the most active and the most numerous that we shall succeed at the same time in understanding what influences are exerted on the lives of the inhabitants of the plains.

133 The Haut-Atlas /High Atlas/ and the Anti-Atlas do not by
• 491 any means constitute an impassable barrier. They are crossed by numerous passes, which take the line of the valleys, by which constant relations are established between the two versants, so that the displacement of people, the migration of families and tribes are scarcely stopped by the obstacle of the mountains.

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In the western Atlas the Tizi n Fedghat and the Tizi n Telwet, at close to 2,000 meters in altitude, thus put the land of the Skoura, the Haut-Dra, in communication with Demnat and Marrakech by a road that the winter snows sometimes cut for several weeks. Farther to the West, the Tizi n Test, which rises to 1,900 meters, presents the same difficulties; it is followed by travelers who are going from Taroudant to Marrakech by following the valley of the Nefis. The Tizi Ma'cho, whose altitude does not go beyond 1,400 meters, is free in all seasons; it commands the passage from Taroudant to Imi n Tanout and Mogador. Finally, no difficulty is found on the coastal trail, which borders the country of the Haha, other than the slope of the last hills of the Atlas or the bed of the dry wadis in the vicinity of the Ocean; this is the natural route of invasions between the plains of the Sous and Marrakech, which Arabs and Berbères /Berbers/ have so often taken in the course of the centuries.

These routes of the Derén are themselves only the prolongation of the ones used across the Anti-Atlas by travelers who have come from the palm groves of the Noun /Nun/ and the Bani and who want to reach the towns of the North. From Aqqa and Tatta, by way of the crests of the Ida ou Kensous or the valley of the Inda ou Zal, one thus arrives in the Sous plain at the very point where the trail of the Tizi n Test climbs the Haut-Atlas toward Marrakech; from Tamanart by way of Amanouz and the Tizi n Taraqatin one reaches the land of the Ida ou Gnidif and the Ait Mzal, to find before him the passage of the Tizi Ma'cho across the Derén. Between /16/ the Ocean and the western massif of the Kest and of the Ida ou Semlal, the rolling territory of the Ait Ba 'Amran, the plain of Tiznit and of the Chtouka offer an easy route for the caravans that go up toward Mogador by following the trail of the Haha.

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There are many other intermediate passes, which, without being graded for the movement of the heavily loaded camels, cross the high crests between the upper valleys of each versant. In the Derén during the fine season the montagnards use up to

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133 more than 3,000 meters of altitude with their mules, difficult
-491 roads that, in addition, are enlivened by the passage of the
[492] women, children, and flocks.

[233] The transhumance of the sheep and goats, the exchange of
[438] the walnuts, wool, and almonds of the high valleys for the
grain, tea, sugar, and manufactured objects from the souks
/sooks/ of the Dir maintain the continuity of these relations.

The activity observed on these crests during the days of spring
and summer is enough to make one understand the importance
of the bonds that unite plain and mountain.

In vain does the internal partitioning of the valleys, which
the successive tiers of the Atlas cut up into separate basins and
seal up by gorges, isolate the villages one from another. In
* [634] spite of the reciprocal hostility of the Berbère /Berber/ cantons
[578] on the same route of passage, one sees alliances established at
[437] great distances, from the North to the South, in the direction
followed by the transverse routes of the mountains. The small
states of the summits are associated with the villages of the last
slopes or of the plain in the same way.

361 On the other hand, relations are difficult between villages
628 established at the same altitude in the parallel valleys, and only
[487] goat paths permit passing from one to the other; besides, since
[438] economic exchanges between the neighboring populations who
live under identical conditions are of no interest, one understands
that the political horizon of the small mountain states, so ex-
tended toward the North or toward the South, in the direction of
the plain of Marrakech or the interior plain of the Sous, is, on
the other hand, toward the East or toward the West limited for
each of them to the closest villages.

491 VIII. The mountain massifs. -- The role of these great
routes of passage that cross the two chains is not only /17/ to
facilitate the moving of people and economic activity. They
[184] cut the Atlas and Anti-Atlas into separate massifs, inside which
the material and social life of the tribes takes on peculiar forms,
which give each of them a true originality and explain the

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491 distinct part that their inhabitants took in the great historic
184 events of the Moroccan South.

491 Actually, it is on the road of the passes that the passage of
178 tribes and the action of the Makhzen /makhzan/ have had the
result, for centuries, of destroying the local institutions and of
making these natural routes, from a political point of view, a
sort of extension of the plain into the middle of the mountains.

[643] The Sultan has his harkas advance upon this line of stopping
[619] places, marked out by casbahs, when he wishes to intervene in
the life of the country; leaders who serve the cause of the Em-
pire are born and grow up there, while in solitude, in their in-
accessible valleys, the independent tribes, on the other hand,
unite in order to see to the defense of their borders.

619 Such is the group formed by the tribes of the Glawa, Ourika,
491 Ghighaya, and Ouzgita of the Haut-Tifnout in the difficult re-
131 gion bounded on the east by the Tizi n Fedghat and on the west
133 by the Tizi n Test. A broad massif, whose summits reach
4,300 meters in altitude at the Wanoukrim and at the Likoumt,
dominates all this part of the mountains; it contains the glacial
lake of Ifni, and the snows of its plateaus give birth to torrents
everywhere. On the two versants narrow and encased valleys
break away, in which a man is as though crushed by a too-pow-
erful Nature. Nowhere in the Atlas does one experience so
133 strong an impression of isolation as in the villages of the Ourika
361 or of the Haut-Tifnout, lost under the giant walnut trees bathed
619 by the cold waters from the summits. The presence of the Telwet
491 pass alone gives some life to this harsh country, situated apart
648 from the great historic currents, and one understands that its in-
habitants, once subject to the Makhzen /makhzan/, had no role
other than to give their support to foreign leaders, masters of the
Haut-Dra or of the plain of Marrakech, or they put their stubborn
energy at the service of the masters of the great pass, called by
their ambitions to faraway enterprises in the steppes of the south.

491 Between the road that leads from the Nefis to the Tizi n Test
133 and the one that leads from Imi n Tanout to the Tizi Ma'cho
there extends another region whose appearance is less harsh and
less wild.

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[map 1]

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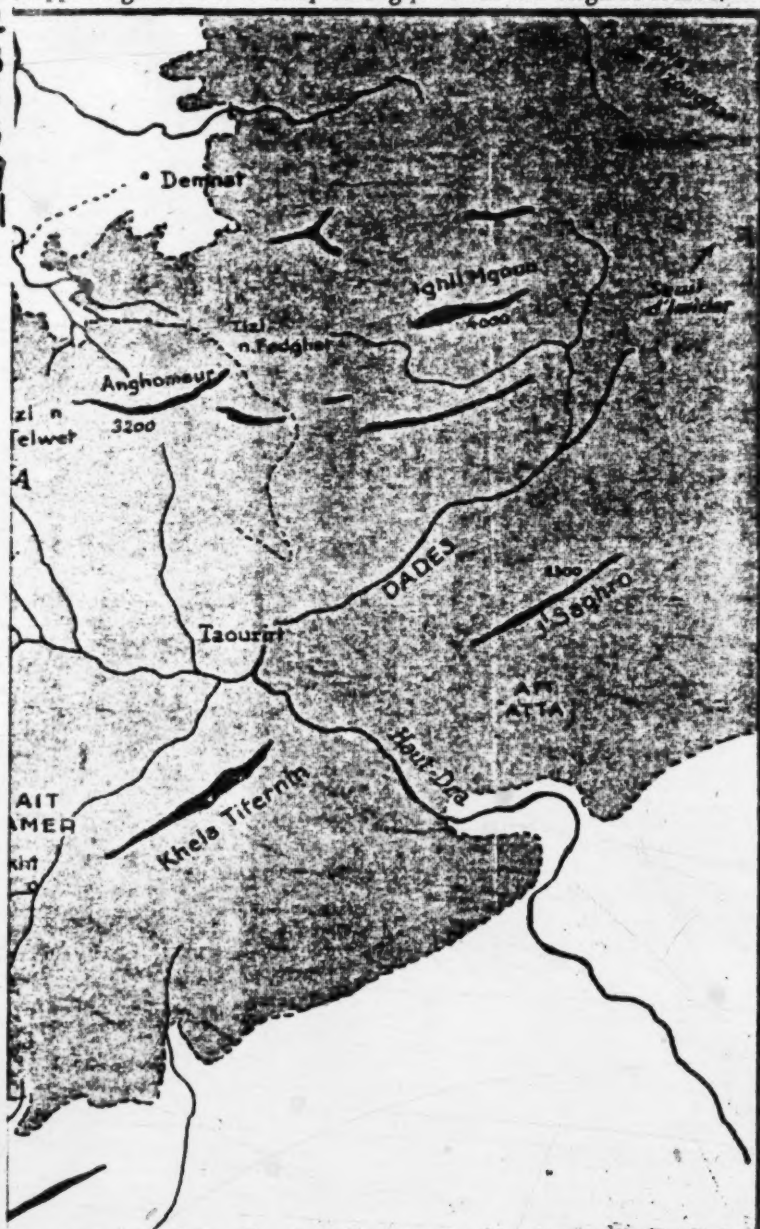
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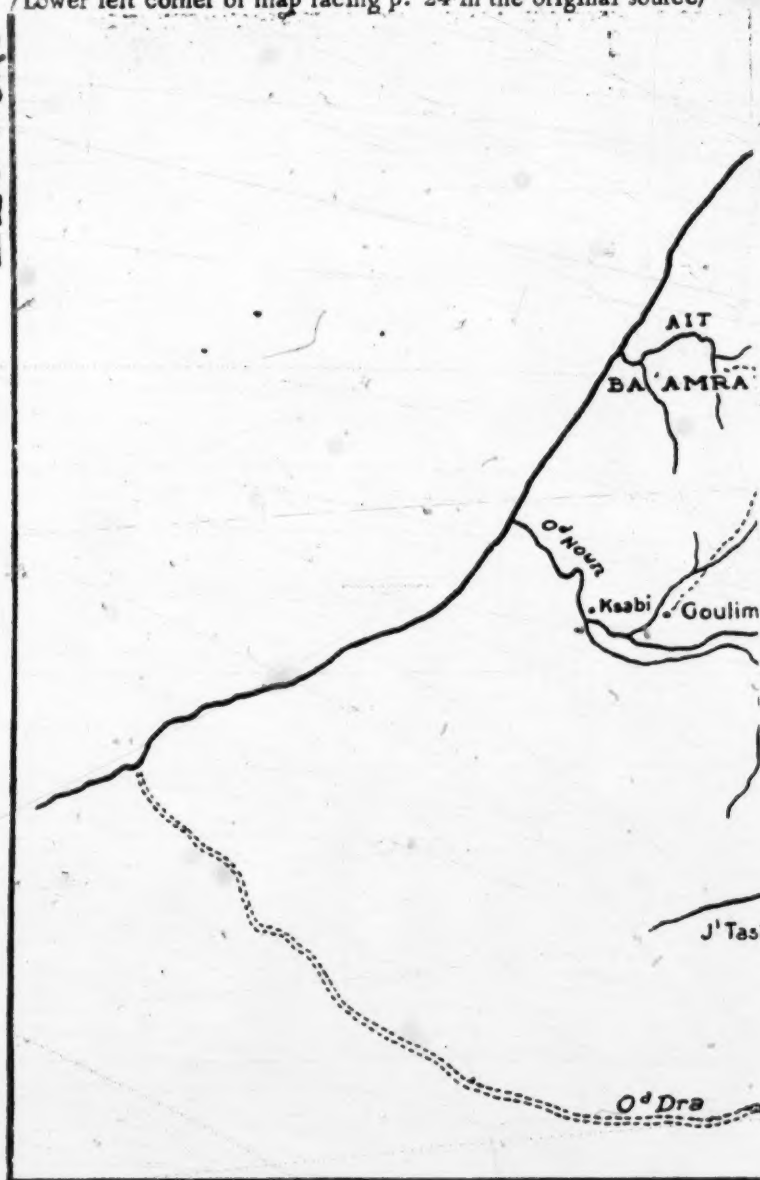
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[MAP 17]

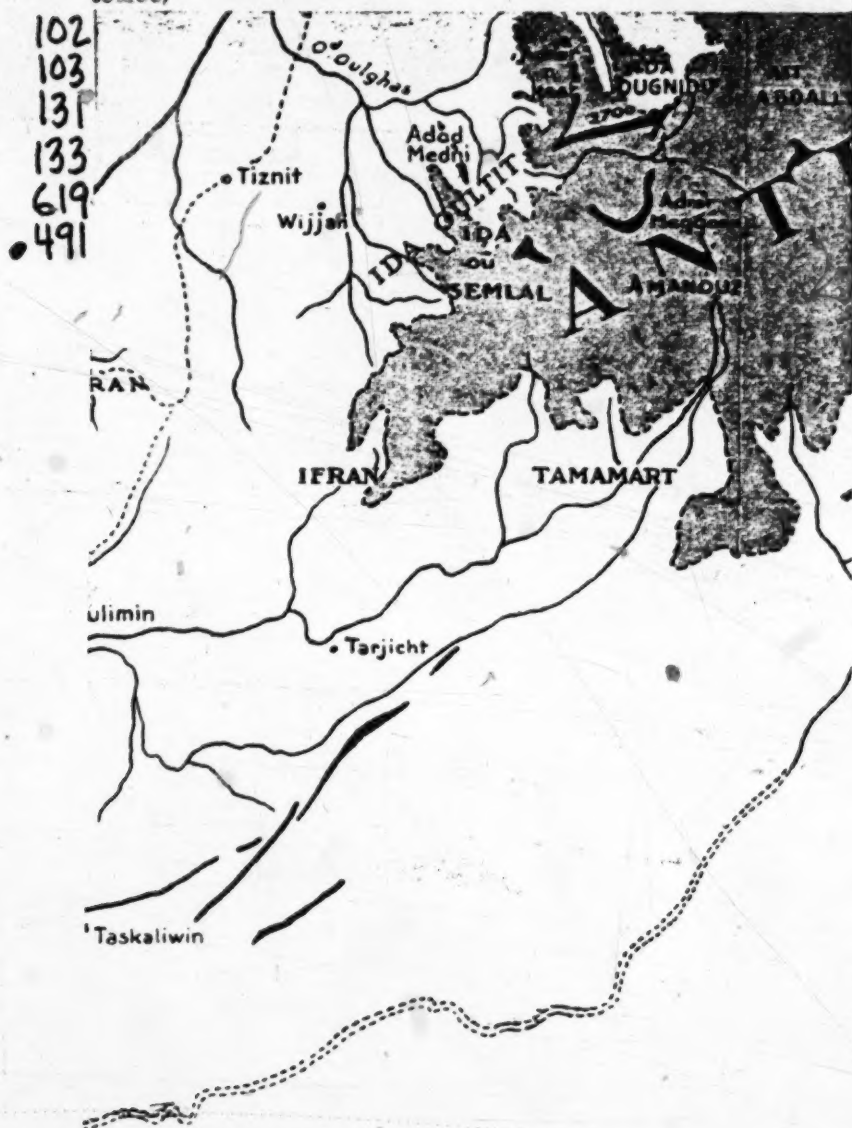
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[Map 1]

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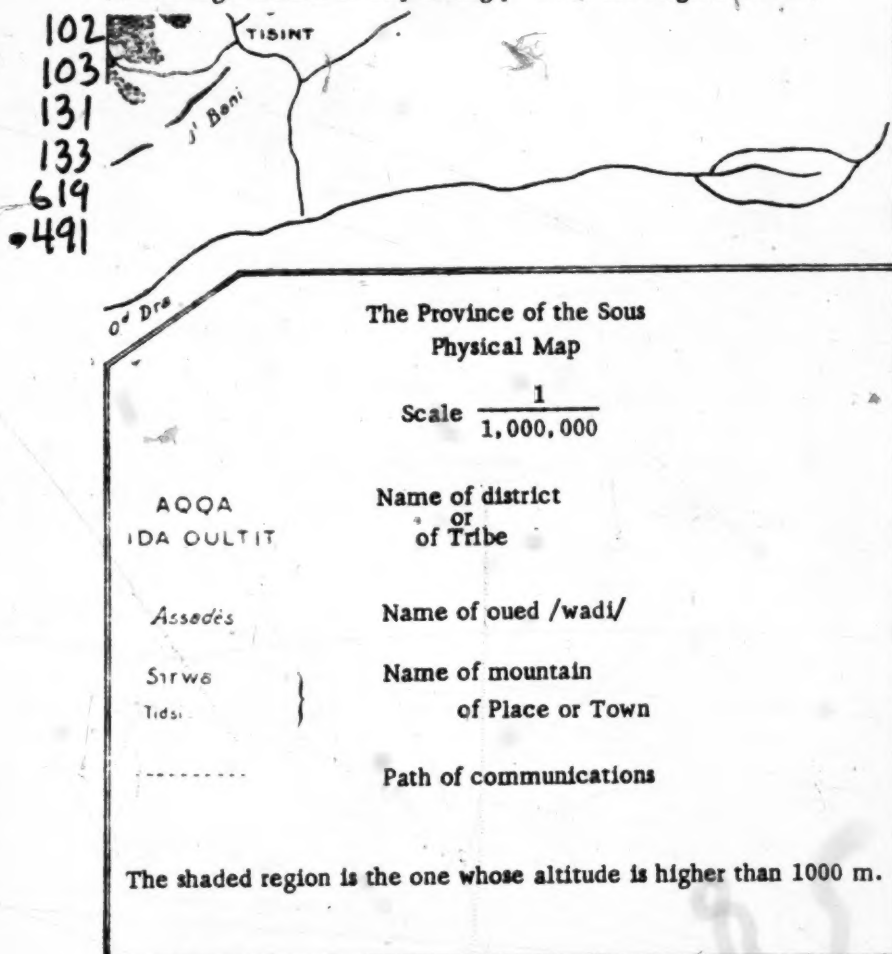
[Map 17]

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(Map 1)

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leagues that gradually united all the Berbère /Berber/ republics in the same friendships and the same hatreds. These alliances were given the Arabic name of "leff" or the Chleuh /Shluh/ name of "amqon" (1).

1. From the Berbère /Berber/ qqen (to attach, to bind). Compare: Destaing, Vocabulaire français berbère /French-Berber Vocabulary/, I. p. 25 (eqqen, to harness), and de Foucauld, Dict. Touareg-fr. /Tuareg-French Dictionary/, II. p. 516.

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The small territorial groups that entered into these systems of alliance in the high mountains were isolated "taqbilt" constituted in the form that we have already studied at length; nearer the Dir, they were "khoms" or "rba", "fractions of tribes having the same size as the "taqbilt" of the summits; as an exception, weaker units, "mouda" or subfractions, especially in the vicinity of the plains subject to the Makhzen /makhzan/, made use of one or the other of the two leffs.

No precise rule permits one to explain a priori the mode of distribution of the two leffs.

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By examining the map, drawn up after numerous investigations, one distinguishes, however, some general principles for the balance of the parties. It happens rarely, first of all, that a "taqbilt" would be entirely isolated from its allies, and the communications that it /186/ preserves with the other cantons seem to be established most often by way of the cols and the lines of crests. In the mountains two or three units belonging to the same alliance are frequently found side by side. On the contrary, the big valleys or the roads that constitute natural routes of penetration are occupied by small opposed groups almost rigorously alternated. The Aghbar, the Ogdermt, the Asif Nefis, the Asif el Mal, the road of the Tizi Ma'cho offer particularly striking examples of these modes of distribution. Only the great mass of the Seksawa, which groups closely five cantons of the leff of the

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* 634 "Indghertit," seems to furnish a derogation to the usual rules of
616 equilibrium (1).
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1. It may be that the explanation of this anomaly should be sought in the progressive development of these particularly warlike and conquering "taqbilt" (cf. p. 203 above).

Sometimes, moreover, local history shows us the repeated efforts of a canton to defeat the adverse villages established on the other side of the col. This is because control of the route of passage is especially precious, because it can augment the value of the alliances of leffs. Being able to communicate freely at any time with his "brothers" is, indeed, for the Berbère /Berber/ one of the most pressing necessities of his external policy; the small colonies that are sometimes found apparently isolated in the high valleys are always connected, by difficult roads, to stronger groups that can sustain them; there is no doubt but that this constant concern for free communications contributed toward creating the distribution of the two leffs that we observe at present in the form of cantons alternated and tied to their associates by the cols and the lines of crests.

* 634 As a general rule it is whole "taqbilt" that enter into one or
616 the other of the two leffs. There do exist sometimes, however, fractions that are peopled by families belonging to both parties, living in separate villages; such are the Alt Tounert of the canton of the Ida Ou Izimmer, in the tribe of the Ida Ou Mhamoud, or, in the region of the Sirwa, the Id Nouh. But this situation appears to be connected with the presence of former, weakened "taqbilt," absorbed by more powerful neighbors.

III. Role of the leffs among the Masmouda. -- The political chessboard of the leffs shows extreme importance for the life of the independent "taqbilt." /187/ Thanks to this arrangement of equilibrium, permanent assurance against the risks of war is thus constituted. In the tribe of the Aghbar, at the sources of the

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The "Aoggwa" (1)

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1. The Aoggwa appear to us to have been an ancient Berbère /Berber/ tribe of the Sous. Their name is found at various points of the country (Unpublished notes of F. de la Chapelle on the mountain tribes of the Mtougga command).

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are formed by most of the tribes that are found nowadays on the western routes of penetration of the mountains. From the plain of the Chtouka they extend on the one hand toward Tiznit, the Oulad Jerrar, the Aït Brihim, the Ifran, by the coast trail; on the other hand they go up toward the summits by way of the Aït Mzal, the Ida Ou Ktir, and the Ammelin, where they follow the transverse road that leads from the Sous plain toward Tamanart and Tizounin.

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On the plains, in the vicinity of the Ocean, it is not rare that a tribe is divided between the two leffs, but on the whole, especially in the western Anti-Atlas, it is entire tribes or even confederations that enter into one or the other of the alliances. On the contrary, in the East, the units that form the leffs of the Igezzoulén and Souktan scarcely exceed the scope of a canton. Ch. de Foucauld had already observed this more intimate mixture in the Saharan oases at Tatta, Tissint, and in the tribe of the Inda Ou Zal; but on the evidence of incomplete information he believed in the existence of a bloc of "Souktan" embracing the Aït Semmeg, the Souktana, Zenaga, and Aït Amer. In going around the country we were able to convince ourselves of the state of division of the two leffs in the very tribe of the Souktana that gives its name to one of the parties (2).

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2. In order to avoid confusion we shall employ here the Arabic form "Souktana" to designate the tribe of this name, to the south